

Message Text

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21

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 MC-02 ACDA-05 IGA-02 /082 W

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R 302055Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2309

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 0517

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, HO

SUBJECT: GOH PURCHASE OF ISRAELI AIRCRAFT

REF: (A) DAO IR NO. 68410006 76 (DTG 221737Z JAN 76) (NOTAL)

(B) TEGUCIGALPA 0415 (DTG 262120Z JAN 76) (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL (A) REPORTED THAT THE HONDURAN AIR FORCE (HAF) WILL ANNOUNCE A "VERY BIG" MODERNIZATION PRIOR TO FEBRUARY 5. REPORTEDLY, EQUIPMENT WILL INCLUDE A WESTWIND EXECUTIVE TRANSPORT, ARAVA TROOP TRANSPORT, AND ANOTHER "MODERN WEAPONS SYSTEM" FROM ISRAEL. THE DAO SPECULATED THAT THE "MODERN WEAPONS SYSTEM" REFERRED TO A MODERN ISRAELI FIGHTER OR A MISSILE SYSTEM.

2. REFTEL (B) WAS THE EMBASSY'S RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS RESTRAINTS. PARAGRAPH 2(C) STATED THAT THE COUNTRY TEAM IS DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER EFFORTS OF SOME THIRD COUNTRIES, MOST NOTABLY ISRAEL, TO EXPLOIT THE HONDURAS-EL SALVADOR DIS-
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PUTE TO PROMOTE THE SALES OF ARMAMENTS WHICH ARE CLEARLY ESCALATING THE ARMS RACE.

3. LT. COLONEL DOMINGO ALVAREZ, COMMANDER OF THE AIR FORCE, HAS JUST INFORMED A MILGP OFFICER THAT THE GOH PLANS TO BUY FIVE SUPER MYSTERE SUPERSONIC FIGHTER-BOMBERS, FOUR ARAVA TROOP TRANSPORTS AND ONE WESTWIND EXECUTIVE JET TRANSPORT FROM ISRAEL. WE HAVE NO FIRM FIGURE IN REGARD TO TOTAL COST BUT ASSUME IT WILL BE SUBSTANTIAL. COMBINED WITH OTHER RECENT PLANE PURCHASES (SEE REFTEL A), THE EVENTUAL FINANCIAL BURDEN FOR HONDURAS ASSUMES SERIOUS PROPORTIONS.

4. ISRAEL SOLD EL SALVADOR SOME 19 OURAGON JETS IN 1974. THE SALE STIMULATED FEARS IN HONDURAS THAT EL SALVADOR WAS ESTABLISHING A SITUATION OF AIR SUPREIORITY. ONE OF THE RESLTS OF THAT FEAR HAS BEEN THE BUILD-UP OF THE HONDURAN AIR FORCE CULMINATING IN THE PROSPECTIVE PURCHASE FROM ISRAEL. IN SHORT, ISRAEL HAS BENEFITED BY SELLING TO THE TWO COUNTRIS INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTE, THUS CONTRIBUTING TO AN INCREASE OF TENSION IN THE AREA.

5. THE EMBASSY WISHES TO DRAW THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION TO THE PRESENT SITUATION, AND SUGGESTS THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE POSSIBILITY OF EXERTING PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TO CURTAIL ITS ESCALATING ARMS SALES IN THE SENSITIVE AREA.
SANCHEZ

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